

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 IO-03 EA-13 EUR-10 AF-04

NSC-10 NSCE-00 ACDA-10 SPC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 EB-03 DRC-01 /090 W

----- 010514

R 150335Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7078

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 5178

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, XF, UN, NP

SUBJECT: NIGHT REACH: NEPALESE CONTINGENT TO UNEF: AIRPORT  
PROBLEM

1. WE HAVE LEARNED FROM GON DIRECTOR CIVIL AVIATION THAT  
DIWI COMPANY OF GERMANY, FIRM DOING ENGINEERING CON-  
SULTING WORK FOR ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AIRPORT PROJECT  
IN KATHMANDU, HAS GIVEN REPORT TO GON STATING THAT LCN OF  
EXISTING KATHMANDU RUNWAY HAS DETERIORATED TO POINT WHERE  
DIWI BELIEVES RUNWAY IS INADEQUATE TO SUPPORT HEAVY AIRCRAFT.  
REPORT IS BASED ON PLATE BEARING TESTS CONDUCTED DURING  
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER.

2. REPORT HAS CAUSED GREAT CONTROVERSY AMONG ENGINEERS  
AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HERE AS DIWI CONDUCTED SIMILAR  
TEST EARLY IN 1971 AND RECOMMENDED AT THAT TIME THAT ANY  
WEAKNESSES IN RUNWAY COULD BE CORRECTED BY OVERLAYS. BY  
CONTRAST, PRESENT REPORT RECOMMENDS THAT ENTIRE RUNWAY BE  
TORN UP AND REPLACED.

3. GON PRESENTLY CONDUCTING ITS OWN TESTS TO DETERMINE  
STRENGTH OF RUNWAY, WHICH PRESENTLY CARRIES LCN RATING OF  
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50. TESTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN ONE MONTH. IMPORTANT TO

NOTE THAT INFORMAL SOURCES WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN, INCLUDING AID ENGINEERS, EXPRESS GREAT SKEPTICISM ABOUT CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY DIWI CONSULTANTS. ENGINEERS TELL US THAT PLATE TESTING METHOD HAS LIMITED APPLICABILITY FOR NON-RIGID RUNWAYS SUCH AS THAT OF KATHMANDU. ALSO, TESTS WERE CONDUCTED DURING PERIOD OF YEAR WHEN MOISTURE CONTENT OF SUB-GRADE IS AT HIGHEST LEVEL. DURING DRY SEASON MOISTURE CONTENT DIMINISHES AND LCN INCREASES. STRONGEST REFUTATION OF DIWI REPORT, HOWEVER, IS FACT THAT KATHMANDU RUNWAY HANDLES ON REGULAR BASIS BOTH BOEING 727'S AND DC-8'S, WITH NO SIGN PAVEMENT FAILURE. IN ADDITION, RUNWAY REPAIR REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT EXCEEDED THE NORM AND HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT ROUTINELY BY GON.

4. COMMENT: WHATEVER THE MERITS OF DIWI REPORT, GIVEN CURRENT PREPARATION FOR UNEF AIRLIFT, WE THINK IT IMPORTANT FOR WASHINGTON TO BE AWARE OF THIS POTENTIAL PROBLEM.  
CARGO

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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